

REMARKS

The indication that claims 15 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, is acknowledged. The Examiner's statement of reasons for the indication of allowance subject matter is also acknowledged, with the Examiner indicating that:

The prior art of record fails to teach or fairly suggest a vacuum processing apparatus as claimed and further comprising plural controllers detachable from the vacuum processing apparatus as one unit. (emphasis added).

In view of the Examiner's indication of the reasons for allowance, based upon the limitation underlined above, by the present amendment, the aforementioned allowable feature of objected to claim 15, together with the features of intermediate claim 13, have been incorporated into independent claim 10, while deleting some features from claim 10, and in view of the Examiner's indication, applicants submit that claim 10, as amended, essentially corresponds to claim 15 written in independent form and should now be allowable together with the dependent claims thereof. In this regard, by the present amendment, objected to claims 15 and 18 have been cancelled together with cancellation of claims 1, 7, 8, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 25 and 27. Many of the dependent claims have been canceled to avoid duplicate claimed features. Accordingly, applicants submit that claim 10 and its dependent claims should now be in condition for allowance.

Also, by the present amendment, new dependent claims 29, 30 and 31 which depend from claim 10 have been presented wherein claim 29 recites the features of the configuration of the vacuum processing chambers which features were deleted from claim 10. New claim 30 corresponds to the features of claim 20, dependent from claim 10, and new claim 31 depends from claim 10 and recites the feature that the plural controllers are mass flow controlling devices, as previously recited in claim

1 and the dependent claims, which claims have been cancelled. Thus, these newly added dependent claims should also be considered and found allowable at this time.

Newly added independent claim 32 corresponds to the features previously present in claim 1, for example, defining the feature of a mass flow controlling unit including two mass flow controlling devices and reciting the feature of the present invention considered allowable by the Examiner of "the two mass flow controlling devices are detachable from the adjacent two processing chambers as one unit". Thus, it is apparent that this claim does not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration and recites the feature considered allowable by the Examiner.

With respect to new independent claim 33, such claim is patterned after claim 10 reciting the feature of plural controllers arranged in the manner set forth and reciting the feature that "the plural controllers are detachable from the vacuum processing apparatus as one unit", which feature the Examiner has recognized patentably distinguishes over the cited art. Thus, applicants submit that claim 33 should also be considered allowable at this time. Further, new dependent claim 34 has been presented which depends from claim 33 and recites the feature of a transfer unit and the connection therewith to the plural controllers in a manner as recited in claim 11, such that claim 34 should also be considered at this time, and found allowable.

Applicants further note that the total number of claims present in this application is less than the number of claims present at the time of final rejection, such that applicants submit that all claims present in this application should be considered and found allowable.

As to the rejection of claims 1, 7 - 8, 25 and 27 under 35 USC 1023(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 6,277,199 to Lei et al in view of US Patent No. 6,062,798 to Muka and the rejection of claims 10 - 14, 16 - 17, 19 - 20, 26 and 28 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lei et al in view of Muka and Japanese Patent No. 08-1278961 A2 to Naito et al, such rejections are traversed insofar as they are applicable to the present claims in that the aforementioned claims have been canceled or amended to incorporate the allowable features of objected to claims 15 and 18 therein. Accordingly, applicants consider it unnecessary to discuss the cited art in relation to the amended and newly presented claims.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicants submit that all claims present in this application should now be in condition for allowance and issuance of an action of a favorable nature is courteously solicited.

To the extent necessary, applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case: 648.43120X00), and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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